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MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE HOUSING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ALAMEDA HELD WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2007

The Commission meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. with Chair Gormley presiding.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Balde, Kurrasch, Pratt, Schlueter, and Chair Gormley.

Absent: Commissioner Trujillo.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Gormley asked to pull item #2-D. Commissioner Kurrasch moved to adopt the Consent Calendar with the exception of #2D. Commissioner Balde seconded Motion carried unanimously. All items accepted or adopted are indicated with an asterisk.

*2-A. Minutes of the Housing Commission Special Meeting held March 14, 2007. Minutes were accepted.

*2-B. Budget Variance Report. This report was accepted.

*2-C. Payment Standard for Two Bedroom Vouchers. The Housing Commission increased the Payment Standard for two bedroom vouchers from \$1329 to \$1375, to be effective July 1, 2007 for annual re-exams and immediately for new contracts.

2-D. Amending the Administrative Plan Governing Section 8 Programs. Executive Director Michael Pucci explained that the Housing Authority is recommending changes to the Administrative Plan for Section 8. The first change is to incorporate language from the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which was passed in 2005. The second is to make changes to the Project-Based Voucher Program. The third is to amend the Administrative Plan to allow moves for voucher holders outside of the City of Alameda within one year, currently it's not allowed unless they have disabilities. The fourth is to allow informal hearings for disabled and request a reasonable accommodation. If they did not agree with the decision of the Housing Authority they can appeal it under a grievance policy. Mr. Pucci went on to say the VAWA memorializes some of the current practices. It requires the Housing Authority to issue notices to tenants and landlords and to program participants. The VAWA prohibits Housing Authorities and Section 8 landlords from evicting a family because one of the family members is abusing another family member. It allows the Housing Authority or landlord to remove just the abusive family member. This act prohibits action against the entire family when one family member is creating the problem.

Chair Gormley asked if the abuser can make it difficult to remove him. Mr. Pucci responded it is always difficult to remove people, especially when other family members want them to stay. He's not aware of any situations currently happening.

Commissioner Kurrasch asked if it is Violence Against "Woman" or "Women" Act. Mr. Pucci will check and correct. Commissioner Kurrasch said it is good to have formal policy on this issue. He also asked if it makes a difference if the Police get involved. Mr. Pucci responded that it depends on the sentencing; if the person is incarcerated they are out of the household, if they come back the Housing Authority may get involved.

Commissioner Pratt had no comment.

Commissioner Kurrasch moved that the Housing Commission adopt the proposed changes to the Administrative Plan regarding the Project-Based Voucher Program, implementing the Violence Against Woman Act, and other miscellaneous changes. Commissioner Pratt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pucci added this is for the Section 8 Program only and staff will be coming back to the Commission on Esperanza, as it applies to public housing.

- *2-E. Recommending Award of Contract for Eagle Village Door and Hardware Project. The Housing Commission recommends the Board of Commissioners award a contract to replace doors and install door hardware at Eagle Village for an amount not to exceed \$106,000 and to authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract.
- *2-F. Recommending Policy on Naming of Housing Authority Facilities. The Housing Commission recommends the Board of Commissioners adopt a resolution adopting the Policy for Naming City Property, Facilities and Streets, which would include Housing Authority facilities.

3. AGENDA

- 3-A. Amending the Description of Role and Responsibilities of a Housing Commissioner. Mr. Pucci explained this was adopted in February by the Housing Commission. Board of Commissioner member Torrey recommended language be added for regular attendance. Mr. Pucci also added abilities and recommended the Housing Commission adopt with those amendments.

Commissioner Kurrasch was happy to see a comprehensive list. He thanked Commissioner Torrey for bringing back the issue of regular attendance.

Commissioner Kurrasch moved adopting the amended Role and Responsibilities of a Housing Commissioner. Commissioner Pratt seconded. Motion adopted unanimously.

- 3-B. Awarding Contract for Parrot Village Landscape Improvements and Recommending Award of Contract for FY2008 Landscape Maintenance Services. Mr. Pucci said this item awards a contract to Tree Sculpture for regular, ongoing maintenance of all complexes. Tree Sculpture has performed maintenance for three years and this would extend their contract. This bid is lower than the current contract being paid.

Commissioner Pratt asked where they are located. Mr. Pucci will check and get back to her and explained staff tries to hire Alameda contractors. Mr. Pucci then explained the process of going out to bid and performance bonds.

Commissioner Schlueter moved the Housing Commission:

- 1) Award a contract in an amount not to exceed \$70,000 to Tree Sculpture Group, Inc. for landscape improvements at Parrot Village;
- 2) Recommend awarding a separate contract to Tree Sculpture Group, Inc. for ongoing landscape maintenance services starting July 1, 2007, for \$103,944, and with the option to renew the contract for up to two additional one-year terms with increases of 2.5 percent each year, contingent upon funding and a good contractor performance evaluation;
- 3) Authorize the Executive Director to spend up to 20 percent additional as a contingency for necessary repairs; and
- 4) Authorize the Executive Director to execute both contracts.

Commissioner Pratt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Kurrasch said it is beneficial to have one contractor take care of this.

Commissioner Gormley commented on the great job the painters have done on Independence Plaza. Mr. Pucci said next year there will be a proposal on the fountains to get them above ground to eliminate problems.

Commissioner Pratt left at 7:19 pm.

- 3-C. Discussion on Smoking Free Housing in Housing Authority Complexes. Chair Gormley thanked everyone for coming. She said interest is excellent on this issue, this is a beginning to find a solution. Chair Gormley explained the rules of participation.

Speaker Kenneth Leung, resident Independence Plaza, had a very good meeting with Norm Ng, Housing Manager. Mr. Ng. agreed to speak to their downstairs neighbor about the second-hand smoke and another smoker in a different unit. Mr. Leung invited his neighbors to support him on this issue and was happy to see them in attendance.

Speaker Margaret Seaman, resident 711 Atlantic Avenue, #158, read a letter from Mercedes Bongolan about her concern about cigarette smoke. Ms. Seaman also described the effect second-hand smoke has had on her family and herself. She is hopeful that something will be done about this problem. Chair Gormley opened the discussion to determine if the Housing Commission wishes to adopt policies governing smoking in Housing Authority complexes and give staff direction.

Speaker Al Baughman, resident 703 Atlantic Avenue, #103, said he also represents another resident, Lee Johnson. He said Mr. Leung and Ms. Seaman brought up the main concern, which is health, and both he and Ms. Johnson agree. They support this effort to eliminate second-hand smoke.

Chair Gormley added that Ms. Johnson's unit had been previously occupied by a smoker. The cost to clean and fix the unit must have been very high. Mr. Baughman acknowledged this and said Ms. Johnson continues to have problems with the unit.

Speaker Pei Hong Wu, resident 710 Atlantic Avenue, #456, has a neighbor across the hall in unit 455 who smokes. The smoke drifts to his unit and is worse when she opens her door. He would like the Housing Authority to speak to her and ask her to be more considerate. He said smoking is not good for anyone. He supports the ban on smoking. Chair Gormley thanked Mr. Wu for his time and thoughts on this issue.

Resident Zhu Yu Yuan, resident at 707 Atlantic Avenue, #227, was represented by Mr. Leung speaking on her behalf. Mr. Leung submitted a letter written by Ms. Yuan and proceeded to translate. Ms. Yuan described ashtray stands at buildings and the foul smell from cigarette butts. She asked them to be moved away from the buildings. She said her previous residence in Oakland banned smoking. She urged the Commission to adopt a more restrictive policy to protect the health of the non-smoking residents. Mr. Pucci said he will talk to staff about the situation.

Speaker Patricia Cummings, resident 709 Atlantic Avenue, applauded Mr. Leung for bringing up this issue and thanked the Commission for getting the conversation started. Her building has a number of smokers who smoke outside on the sidewalk. The smoke comes into her unit and the smoker dispose of their cigarettes in the bushes. She is very glad this issue is being addressed and she offered to help.

Commissioner Kurrasch applauded everyone for bringing this issue up and starting the conversation. He suggested a committee be formed with staff, two Commissioners, and residents of Independence Plaza to draft a policy. He remarked on the support documents provided by staff and explained that smokers also have rights. Smokers need to be sensitive to the health needs of those around them. He suggested residents be vocal advocates to their smoking neighbors. He described how prisons have become smoke free and noticed that the Housing Authority's

administrative building has a no-smoking sign. He feels the Board of Commissioners/City Council will support this policy as it is an issue City-wide.

Commisisoner Balde thanked everyone for pursuing this and encouraged continuation.

Commissioner Schlueter said he liked the idea of a committee. He shared his past experiences regarding smokers. He stated smoking is not healthy but he is not sure what rights smokers have. He would like to investigate further and is supportive of a non-smoking policy. He discussed the importance of notification and suggested designated places may be the solution. He said it's important the committee include smokers and non-smokers. He concluded by saying non-smoking is in our future and it is time to consider it here.

Speaker Grace Taube, resident 705 Atlantic Avenue, described approaching her smoking neighbor. Smoking is affecting her health and she asked if a building could be used for smokers. Chair Gormley assured her a committee will work on solving this issue. She invited everyone to return to future Housing Commission meetings. She asked that people submit names for the committee in writing to her.

Commissioner Kurrasch encouraged this topic to be brought up at the next Resident Council meeting to see who would be interested in serving on the committee. Chair Gormley said the Resident Council meets on the first Wednesday. She said the committee will be gathering information to look at all of the options. Chair Gormley asked if a survey could be done to determine the number of smokers. Mr. Pucci said a survey could be done but it depends on the number of resident that respond. He suggested Maintenance staff could provide an estimate. He talked about a letter he received from a Stanford house resident asking if this could also be done at their four unit complex. Other complexes may also be included in this policy in the future. Chair Gormley asked that at the Resident Council meeting names be gathered from those interested in serving on the committee and they will meet.

Open discussions to determine if the Housing Commission wishes to adopt policies governing smoking in Housing Authority complexes and give staff direction.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Michael Torrey talked about an Emergency Mitigation Preparedness meeting he attended and distributed survey forms. The City is putting together a disaster plan and the survey poses questions to citizens about their concerns and needs during a disaster.

Mr. Torrey mentioned the April 28th tour of the Housing Authority complexes. Mr. Pucci said it may be postponed because a number of Commissioners are unavailable.

5. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Schlueter said he met with Mr. Pucci and reviewed a manual to get oriented. They also toured Housing Authority complexes.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chair Gormley adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Nancy W. Gormley, Chair

Attest:

Michael T. Pucci

Executive Director / Secretary